

Perennial housing shortage goes into worst year

By LORNE PARKER

The most serious housing shortage to hit university students in recent years is preventing some students from attending university here, and is causing most students to have problems finding accommodations.

Since the orientation program began last week many students have been forced to live in temporary accommodations in the SUB and McConnell Hall. Beds were provided by the Emergency Measures organization after a request was made by the student government. About 20 students have been using the temporary

beds each night.

All residences at both UNB and STU are filled, and most have long waiting lists. UNB made an attempt to house more students by changing single rooms to doubles and doubles to triples.

When the situation first arose the university accommodations office approached local clergy asking them to make a call from the pulpit requesting their congregations to assist students in finding living quarters.

However, early last week accommodations officer Helga Stewart said the problem was easing and all students would be housed. She said that as students

settle into campus they begin to move into apartments with their friends, taking the pressure off the remaining available housing.

Apartments are the most difficult to find, she said, for both faculty and students. Most of the apartments still available have high rents or are substandard, she said.

Some apartment owners were charging as high as \$360.00 per month for a two bedroom apartment unfurnished and unlighted. In past years there has been as many as 8 students sharing a basement apartment.

City council has attempted to assist the university in solving the

problem by adjusting bus schedules to allow students to live farther from the campus and still have transportation to classes.

A taped interview with Brian Edwards, Orientation Chariman, broadcast over CFNB, produced favourable results. Many people called the accommodations office and offered rooms for the students.

The problem has been compounded by the fact that there has been an increase in enrollment this year, and a shortage of off campus housing.

Some landlords are unwilling to rent to students because of bad experiences with some student

tenants in the past, and others do not want students because most students want only an eight-month lease, forcing landlords to risk low occupancy levels during the summer months.

SRC president Warren McKenzie has criticized the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission for not allocating funds to build additional residences.

However Statistics Canada has predicted that student enrollment will decrease in the 1980's.

McKenzie criticised the MPHEC on the basis that the problem will continue for five years before the effect of decreased enrollment will be felt on campus.

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McKenzie-Higgins meet fixed to discuss student aid

Warren McKenzie, University of New Brunswick student president, will meet with provincial Liberal opposition leader Robert Higgins to discuss student aid legislation.

No date has been fixed for the conference but McKenzie said it would probably be held next week. The meeting was announced

Wednesday as student representatives expressed skepticism about the expected outcome of yesterday's meeting with provincial youth minister Jean-Pierre Ouellet.

Atlantic Federation of Students Chairman Jim MacLean said before The Brunswickan went to press Wednesday that he expected there would be little "constructive" response from the minister "since there has been little reaction to our past approaches to the government."

MacLean, McKenzie, Universite de Moncton representative Gerard Blanchard and representatives from colleges in Shippegan and

Edmundston were expected to meet with Ouellet yesterday at 2:30 p.m. Their requests included:

- Immediate student representation on the policy-making bodies of the student aid program;

- Immediate student representation on the loan appeal committee;

- Deletion of the requirement that some students include their previous year's tax return in their application;

- A 25 per cent increase in the living and miscellaneous allowances in the existing scheme;

- An increase in the official assessment of the length of the

- academic year from 32 to 35 weeks to allow for Christmas and March breaks;

- An increase in the book and supply allowance from \$165 to \$225.

The AFS said in a press release the increase in the living allowance was made necessary by the

combined effects of inflation and unemployment. MacLean said the province's requirement for summer savings had increased 20 per cent while at the same time federal government figures indicated there had been a 14 per cent increase in student employment this year.

He said, in addition, that the maximum living assessment of \$38. was unfair especially considering that a single person living on social assistance was assessed for \$46 each week. The living allowance, he said, did not compare well with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

An increase was also needed in the miscellaneous allowance since it was "unrealistic" to expect students to cloth and maintain themselves on \$13.50 a week for eight months. Provincial student aid director Evelyn Briggs said this figure was the maximum allowed by the federal government which shares administration of the program with the province.

She said the \$38 compared favorably with similar provisions in the schemes offered by other provinces. New Brunswick also allows for individual appeals on the costs of room and board, she said.

MacLean said he had no criticism of the change in the allotment announced by the government in a mini-budget brought down in May. Previously, a student had had to apply for \$1,100 before being entitled to a

\$700 maximum bursary and then a further \$300 could be borrowed. The new allotment requires students to apply for \$1,400 but they may then receive a maximum bursary of \$1,000 and then borrow a further \$4,000.

His main concern is with the criteria and the assessment procedure. The UNB Board of

Governors last May recommended the government change the criteria to overcome increased tuition and residence fees. A brief

for submission to the province is being prepared by McKenzie and UNB administrative vice president James O'Sullivan.

The university expressed its views on student aid in the five year projections submitted last May to the Maritime Provinces

Higher Education Commission.

"We believe," the submission stated, "that the minimum step to be taken must be to revise the present student aid program to offset the effects of inflation, and the higher university charges for tuition, room and board, which

have been necessary to balance institutional budgets."

A study session by students involving absence from classes had been set for Sept. 17 but was cancelled after a meeting was arranged with Higgins.



Photo by ANNE ROVAY

Orientation was a big success this year, as is usual at UNB. Above some Fredericton resident gets his shoes buffed as two freshman take part in the Shinerama campaign. Funds raised help persons afflicted with cystic fibrosis.

The University of New Brunswick Senate has ultimate control of all purely academic matters at UNB.

the principle of student representation of faculty councils.